764 and announces that the mask is about to be brought out so that people would go back to their home. At noon, a member of the society puts on the paraphernalia of the Komo society and walks forth, preceded by the son of the chief, who whistles a funeral tune. He wears on his shoulder the sack containing the altars and carries in his right hand the axe and the dagger. The two men are followed by the newly circumcised boys carrying the body and by the members who are present. At the burial ground (sudoyoro) the procession places the corpse on its back near the grave freshly dug by the young /192, Fig. 16 appears here in original text/ /193/ men of the most recent age grade (1). To the rhythm beaten out by three blacksmith drummers,

[535]

1. In the vicinity of Ségou the dead are most frequently buried in the fields; a ronier is planted over the grave.

the son of the deceased and later all the participants dance in turn, kicking up with their feet a little earth over the corpse at the end of each musical phrase.

A female goat (or a male one) brought by the family is sacrificed and the blood runs in part over the altars and in part into the grave, while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer:

"Let (your family) rest in peace; let our harvests be blessed; let your happiness come to us later; your sacrifices are performed" (2).

2. I ka du to; ana senefɛ ka barka;
i ka here ka na an ye; i ka saraka be bwɔra.

The sacrifice performed over the altars is a repetition of that which has already been accomplished in the sanctuary at the time the deceased's soul is deposited. But, to the young initiates who do not know it, it is at this moment only that the transfer of the soul to the nimara boli is effected through the vehicle of the sacrificial blood.

The eldest man of the age grade sucks up with the whistle of the Komo a little blood from the slit throat of the animal and blows on the corpse; another elder sucks up some blood in turn and blows it into the grave. A third does the same and whistles into the right ear of the corpse "so that the deceased, having received a complete sacrifice, may not ask for anything else." A griot next takes the whistles and

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

881 In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages
●535 and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

881 The Bambara themselves interpret these various details
201 concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk, and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-
[302] son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1).

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

881 End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli: the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

8

88| and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance
301 shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 17]

1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

88| Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
[535] dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial cus-
[578] tom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

2: Monteil--384 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

545 794 522

Example:
Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794

The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 881

Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517

A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109]

CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

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In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
776 married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
535 to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
[534]

1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

776 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe
824 that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[785] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté), " and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with
796 sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
782 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kara, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
785

585 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the boli déou,
589 sons of the boli, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to
778 their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called kéné salo, "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who

> 2. Kéné, "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; salo, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the boli and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "kouyo kouyo" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move
● [535] their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

[535] shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before

[595 592]

1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

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Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.
/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia./

4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8